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the interpretation that has been given to it by the authoritative exposition of the courts (and so far as practicable, in the precise language of the courts), or by the well-established practice of the government."

But in so doing—and it is no small praise that the author has realized his purpose—he has refrained from the citation of authority of any kind and he has abstained almost wholly from citing adjudged cases. A careful examination of the text discloses a total of nine with a possible tenth—the Northern Securities Company's case—as a footnote to page 123. This fact limits its usefulness not only for the professional but for the youth and unprofessional reader. The book can be taken as a statement of the law and its reason, but the absence of historical and documentary evidence in the form of notes and references makes the book substantially a reader's not a student's book, and the absence of adjudged cases deprives it of serious claims upon the attention of the practitioner.

As a statement of the law, bearing in mind the limitations suggested, the book is one of unqualified excellence. Almost any paragraph might be quoted as evidence of this. The treatment of the clause dealing with the impairment of the obligation of contracts (Sections 255-274) might be singled out, and the difference between the obligation imposed by contract and that created by tort in Section 260 with that of *State of Louisiana v. New Orleans* (1883) 109 U. S. 285, shows how carefully the venerable author has mastered the law of the cases.

There is, however, a slip in Section 167, for while it is true that the existing Bankruptcy Act was approved in 1898, the act was amended on February 7, 1903. There are a few misprints; one in section 453 ("sutgetive" for "fugitive") and in the last paragraph of the text, the printer lost type and reason as well.

It should be said that the book has an unusually large index for so small a text, and that in the appendix Mr. Flanders has been minded to bring together the texts of The Declaration of Independence; The Articles of Confederation; Resolutions and Letter Transmitted to Congress by the Federal Convention, and Washington's Farewell Address.

AN OUTLINE OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK. George Arthur Ingalls, B. A., Counsellor-at-Law. Albany, N. Y.: Matthew Bender. 1904. pp. 79.

Mr. Ingalls has succeeded in making intelligible to the reader the system of government of the City of New York. A long and complicated charter is indeed necessary but well nigh impossible reading for the layman, for as Mr. Ingalls justly says in the preface to his modest little brochure: "One may examine every detail and yet have as ill proportioned an idea of the whole as would be gained by looking at all the pieces of an unfinished mosaic."

The author has clearly accomplished his purpose in a sober, straightforward style, namely, to "summarize the constitutional provisions which relate to county government and elections in cities, classes of cities, and special city laws; and to set forth the organization, general powers, and compensation of the legislative, executive,

and judicial departments of the city of New York and its four counties."

The interest in the book is thus local, but while it can hardly be recommended for summer reading, it is heartily commended to the voter before and after election day.

THE CONVEYANCE OF ESTATES IN FEE BY DEED. James H. Brewster. Indianapolis. Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1904. pp. lxxvii, 607.

For the practical conveyancer, as well as for the student of that intricate branch of the law of real property, this treatise leaves little to be desired. The purpose of the learned author defined in the preface, "to state the principles of law applicable to the transfer of the title to real property by deed in such a manner as to assist one in drafting and interpreting the instrument of transfer" he has adequately performed. The book is upon the whole a well-arranged and admirably composed statement of the principal matters with which the art of conveyancing is concerned. Of course it does not comprehend all the learning which must enter into the equipment of the conveyancer. The whole law of land and not a little of equity jurisdiction is his province. But it was no part of Professor Brewster's plan to educate the real property lawyer for the performance of his professional duties. He has wisely contented himself with the task of explaining the successive steps in the process of alienation by deed and of exposing the pitfalls that beset the path of the unwary practitioner who enters this perilous field.

It must have been a matter of no little difficulty to determine what should and what should not be included in such a scheme, what should be sketched in outline and what filled out in full detail. Little fault can be found with the manner in which the writer has accomplished this task. Chapter III, on The Deed, Ch. IX on The Description of the Property, Ch. XIV, Part I, on Covenants for Title, Ch. XVIII, on Acknowledgment and Ch. XIX, on Delivery are excellent examples of the author's method, being full enough for an understanding of the topics treated and of the difficulties which they present, and yet severely pruned of superfluous matter and unnecessary cases. Perhaps the principal defect of the work is the lack of independent criticism of the authorities and a too-ready acceptance of the law as declared in the cases. But it must be confessed that if there is any kind of law-book in which this conservative attitude is a failing which leans to virtue's side it is a conveyancer's hand-book. For the members of that parlous guild there is no sure footing but *stare decisis*.

The first two chapters, on Alienation in General and The Chief Methods of Voluntary Alienation, etc., are of the slightest character and hardly serve the purpose of an adequate introduction to the detailed study of the subject upon which the author enters with the third chapter. The topic of Recitals (Ch. VI) would seem to merit a fuller treatment. It should at least include a consideration of the only class of cases in which a recital of authority to convey is really important—the execution of powers. The sections (Ch. XIV, Part II) dealing with covenants running with the land (other than cov-